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September 18, 1999

108 Cornell Street, 1 st Floor  
Roslindale, MA 02131-4526

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket Numbers 98N-1230, 96P-0418, 97P-0197

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing this letter to encourage you to ban the practice of Forced Molting of Hens. This practice is not only amazingly cruel, but also is a primary cause of infectious diseases in hens and eggs which is passed along to consumers.

Forced Molting has been scientifically shown to promote disease by destroying the starving hens' immune system. However, I do not believe that you need the scientific community to show this. Logic and common sense should allow one to predict the consequences of such cruel treatment of a living creature. The hens are crammed into tiny cages, unable to move or stretch, and forced to live in their own feces. The results are crippled hens with behavioral problems and disease that no longer produce eggs. Therefore, the US Egg industry, in order to force these hens to produce, treats the effects of cruelty with the additional cruelty of Forced Molting. This is beyond reason. What kind of living creature could sustain such treatment without devastating effects? These birds are not egg-producing machines. My family had hens when I was young, and I remember them producing more eggs than I could have imagined; but of course they were allowed to live in a decent environment where they were given freedom to move about. Why is it that the US Egg industry operates in this manner? Is it because of greed? Are they keeping these hens in such a restrictive environment in order to avoid maintenance and other expenses?

Not only are the hens subjected to the effects of Forced Molting, but more importantly, so are consumers. The US Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service stated that "extended starvation and water deprivation practices lead to increased shedding of salmonella enteritidis (SE) by laying hens subjected to these practices." Thus, consumers of eggs are exposed to such contamination leading to human illness and death.

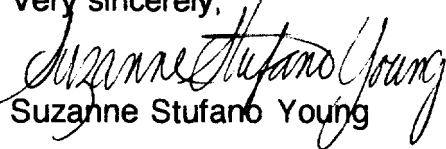
97P-0197

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The FDA exists to protect consumers, not big industry. Placing bacteria warning labels on egg cartons and regulating egg refrigeration temperatures are not sufficient. The administration has jurisdiction to ban cruel farm practices, such as Forced Molting, that lead to egg contamination and disease with subsequent deleterious effects on human health, and should do so. Why does the FDA allow such cruel and dangerous practices to continue?

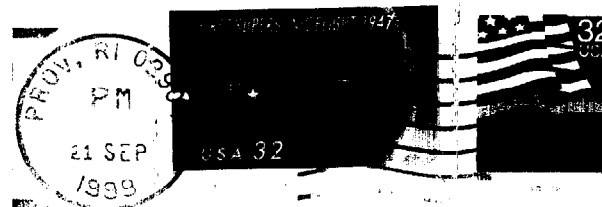
Because of the cruel practices of the US Egg industry and the resulting disease and egg contamination, I no longer purchase or consume eggs. In April 1998, FDA was petitioned to ban Forced Molting and should grant this petition without delay.

Very sincerely,

  
Suzanne Stufano Young



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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
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**CROSS REFERENCE SHEET**

Docket Number/Item Code: 98N-1230/C713

See Docket Number/Item Code: 97P-0197/C714  
96P-0418/C713